What Is Claimed Is:

1.   An automated method of composing a virtual book from a set of electronically stored documentation comprising multiple books, the method
5   comprising:

identifying a plurality of topics in the documentation, wherein each said topic is associated with a portion of the documentation;

determining a structure of the documentation, wherein said structure indicates a hierarchy of said topics within the documentation;

10   classifying each of said topics within one or more categories;

receiving a subject for a virtual book;

composing said virtual book to include a subset of said topics that are relevant to said subject, and each said relevant topic includes a pointer to said associated portion of the documentation.

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2.   The method of claim 1, further comprising searching said topics for a set of topics relevant to said subject.

3.   The method of claim 1, wherein said relevant topics are grouped in
20   said virtual book by said categories.

4.   The method of claim 3, wherein said relevant topics within a first category are listed in the order of their relevance to said subject.

25   5.   The method of claim 3, wherein said relevant topics within a first category are listed in the order they occur within the documentation.

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6.   The method of claim 1, further comprising identifying index entries in the documentation.

7.   The method of claim 6, wherein said index entries are included in

5   said virtual book.

8.   The method of claim 1, further comprising sorting said relevant topics according to their relevance to said topic.

10   9.   The method of claim 1, wherein said categories include one or more of the set of: concept, task, example, reference and troubleshooting.

10.   The method of claim 1, wherein said composing comprises:
         identifying a characteristic of a viewer of said virtual book; and

15   customizing said virtual book for the viewer on the basis of said characteristic.

11.   The method of claim 10, wherein said characteristic is one of the set of: employment role and level of experience.

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12.   The method of claim 10, wherein said characteristic comprises a level of experience of the user and said customizing comprises omitting one or more of said categories from said virtual book.

25   13.   The method of claim 10, wherein said characteristic comprises an employment role of the user and said customizing comprises implementing said role as another category of said virtual book.

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14.   A computer-implemented method of generating a virtual electronic book from a set of electronic documentation comprising multiple books stored in multiple files, comprising:

5   storing physical attributes of the multiple files in a database;

identifying topics within the documentation, wherein each said topic comprises a heading within one of the multiple files;

associating unique identifiers with each of said topics;

storing said topics in said database;

10   for each of said stored topics:

storing in said database a reference to a first book containing said topic;

storing in said database a reference to a first file containing said topic;

15   storing in said database a reference to a parent topic of said topic, if any, in the first book; and

storing in said database a reference to a child topic of said topic, if any, in the first book;

categorizing each of said stored topics into one or more pre-determined

20   categories, wherein each of said categories represents a type of topic;

receiving a subject for a virtual book;

searching said stored topics for topics relevant to the subject; and

presenting said virtual book to a viewer, wherein said virtual book comprises said relevant topics grouped according to said categories.

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15.   A computer readable storage medium storing instructions that, when executed by a computer, cause the computer to perform an automated

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method of composing a virtual book from a set of electronically stored documentation comprising multiple books, the method comprising:

identifying a plurality of topics in the documentation, wherein each said topic is associated with a portion of the documentation;

5   determining a structure of the documentation, wherein said structure indicates a hierarchy of said topics within the documentation;

classifying each of said topics within one or more categories;

receiving a subject for a virtual book;

composing said virtual book to include a subset of said topics that are

10   relevant to said subject, and each said relevant topic includes a pointer to said associated portion of the documentation.

16.   A computer readable storage medium containing a data structure configured for facilitating the generation of a virtual book from a set of electronic

15   documentation comprising multiple books stored in multiple files, the data structure comprising:

a heading copied from a first file of a first book in the documentation;

a file reference to said first file;

a book reference to said first book;

20   a first heading reference to a parent of said heading in said first book;

a second heading reference to a child of said heading in said first book; and

one or more category identifiers, wherein each said category identifier is configured to identify a category into which said heading is classified.

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17.   An apparatus for producing a virtual book, comprising:

a set of electronic documentation files;

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a topic module configured to identify a set of topics within said documentation, wherein each said topic comprises a heading appearing in said documentation;

a structural analysis module configured to determine a hierarchy of said topics within said documentation;

a categorizer configured to classify a first of said topics into one or more predetermined categories;

a database configured to store said topics, said hierarchy and said classifications; and

a processor configured to produce a virtual book comprising a subset of said set of topics, wherein said subset of said topics is relevant to a subject of said virtual book.

18.   The apparatus of claim 17, further comprising a network server configured to present said virtual book to a user.

19.   The apparatus of claim 17, further comprising an index module configured to assemble index entries referring to said relevant topics within said documentation.

20.   The apparatus of claim 17, wherein said processor is further configured to customize said virtual book on the basis of one of a role of a viewer of said virtual book and a level of experience of the viewer.

21.   The apparatus of claim 17, wherein said categories include one or more of the set of: concept, task, example, reference, troubleshooting, role of a viewer of said virtual book and level of experience of the viewer.

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